

LOG OF MEETING

SUBJECT: Flexible Metal Gas Connectors

DATE: June 28, 1996

PLACE: Consumer Product Safety Commission
Room 715

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: Lawrence L. Hershman
Special Assistant to the Chairman

MEETING REQUESTED BY: CPSC Staff

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION (CPSC) REPRESENTATIVES:

Ronald L. Medford, Assistant Executive Director, Office
of Hazard Identification & Reduction
Carlos L. Perez, Deputy Assistant Executive Director,
Office of Compliance
Lawrence L. Hershman, Special Assistant to the Chairman
Richard Frost, Deputy Director, Office of Information
and Public Affairs
James Bertoch, Directorate for Engineering Sciences
Ronald Jordan, Directorate for Engineering Sciences
Kate Sedney, Division of Human Factors, Directorate for
Engineering Sciences
Robert Franklin, Directorate for Economic Analysis
Ronald Monticone, Directorate for Epidemiology and
Health Sciences

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES:

William H. Butterbaugh, Director, Regulatory Affairs,
National Propane Gas Association (NPGA)
Joseph M. Mattingly, Director of Government Affairs and
General Counsel, Gas Appliance Manufacturers
Association, Inc. (GAMA)
Wayne E. Morris, Technical Director, Regulatory
Affairs, Association of Home Appliance
Manufacturers (AHAM)
James A. Ranfone, Director, Codes, Standards and
Technical Support, American Gas Association (AGA)
Gary D. Thibeault, Codes and Standards Coordinator for
Technical Services, Gas Appliance Manufacturers
Association, Inc. (GAMA)

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SUMMARY OF MEETING:

Mr. Medford opened the meeting by describing the staff's concern that gas leak incidents with older style flexible connectors continue to occur. He stated that as a follow up to the staff's June 11, 1996, meeting with AGA, the staff had set up today's meeting with representatives of other gas industry organizations to discuss putting together a broad safety program that would include a component on flexible connector safety.

Mr. Mattingly said that GAMA agreed with the concept of information and education campaigns: It had participated in water heater and vented heater safety campaigns. GAMA is forming a consumer education committee to consider broad based consumer education campaigns. Mr. Mattingly said that a high priority of such a campaign that GAMA might consider would be communicating the need for annual inspections of gas appliances. Mr. Mattingly would recommend that GAMA's members include CPSC staff input in GAMA's campaign, and he said that he hoped CPSC would endorse GAMA's effort. However, GAMA's committee has yet to meet, and GAMA's board of directors has yet to approve funding for such an effort.

In response to Mr. Medford's request for speedier action, Mr. Mattingly said that GAMA would have to evaluate the relative merits of anything the staff proposes, but that GAMA would not support a flexible connector program. He reiterated that GAMA wants to develop its own program and message, with CPSC input if possible. When Mr. Medford said that CPSC wants to enlist the help of appliance servicepeople in a safety effort, Mr. Mattingly said that GAMA already has its own contacts with service networks and plumbers. Mr. Morris said his members also have ties with servicers.

Mr. Medford reminded the attendees of their obligation to consumers to promote safety. Mr. Frost described the harm if nothing is done to prevent future flexible connector incidents. Mr. Butterbaugh said he was sympathetic, but added that he could not predict what his board of directors might decide. The other industry attendees agreed that they could not predict what actions their respective boards would take. Mr. Morris added that his organization was interested in working with CPSC.

Mr. Ranfone presented a safety pamphlet that the AGA distributes. Mr. Medford suggested that the CPSC staff draft a section on flexible connectors to incorporate in the pamphlet, and then send the draft to the other attendees in preparation for another meeting in 30 days to discuss the distribution of the safety message(s). The attendees agreed and the meeting was concluded.